

ABANDONED MINE LANDS

Indicator 8. Abandoned Mine Lands

At a Glance

Abandoned mine land
acres reclaimed. 20,095
of projects . . 1,300

Abandoned mine lands
in Kentucky still
requiring reclamation . .
80,000-150,000 acres

AML fund (million of
dollars)
fee collection. . \$759.2
awards \$350.1

Background The federal Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Program (AML program) was established to address mine lands abandoned prior to 1982. Kentucky received federal authority to carry out this program in 1982. The Kentucky Division of Abandoned Mine Lands oversees all AML projects in the state with the exception of emergency projects, which are handled by federal Office of Surface Mining.

The AML program is supported by a fee of 35 cents per ton on surface mined coal, 15 cents per ton on coal mined underground, and 10 cents per ton on lignite. This money is held in an interest bearing Abandoned Mine Land and Reclamation Fund (AML fund) by the federal government and allocated back to states and tribes for mine reclamation purposes. The fee is authorized until 2004.

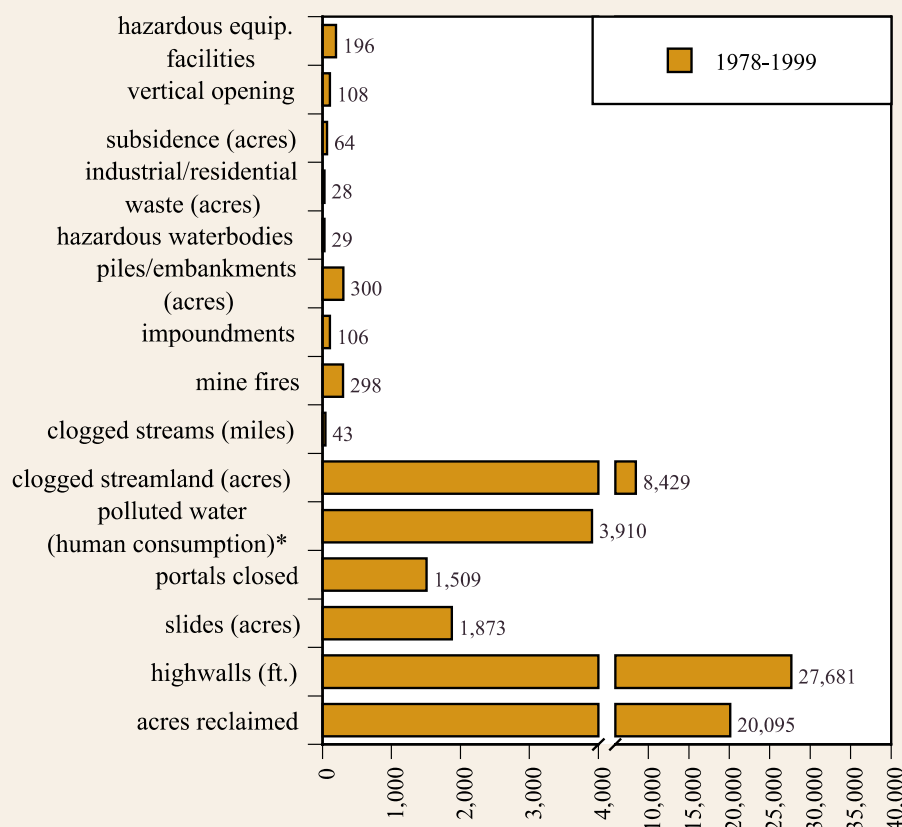
Expenditures from the AML Fund are authorized through the regular congressional budgetary and appropriations process. Federal law specifies that 50 percent of the AML fees collected be returned to the state of origin for reclamation projects. The remainder of the fees are retained by the federal government to support administrative costs of the program, emergency reclamation projects, and additional discretionary grants to the states based on historical coal extraction.

Goal Provide for the restoration of lands mined and abandoned or left inadequately restored prior to 1977.

Progress Nationwide, from 1978 through 2000, \$5.8 billion in AML fees have been collected and \$1.3 billion worth of coal-related high priority sites reclaimed.¹ In Kentucky, the coal industry has paid \$759.2 million in AML fees. The state has received \$350.1 million in AML grants. Of this total, \$74.2 million was in discretionary AML funds based on historical coal extraction. The state's share balance (what is owed to the state and held in trust by Congress) was \$101 million in 2000.²

From 1978 to 2000, Kentucky reclaimed 20,095 acres of abandoned mine lands using AML funds, and more than 1,300 projects were com-

Measure 1. Abandoned Mine Land Projects in Kentucky



RESOURCE EXTRACTION

ABANDONED MINE LANDS

pleted to address abandoned mine land problems.³

Most AML funds used in Kentucky are for restoring sites and for projects that pose imminent threats to human health and safety. Projects include the elimination of highwalls, clearing clogged streams, restoring potable water supplies and stabilizing slides. During 1998 and 1999, Kentucky undertook a major abandoned mine land reclamation project. The Pleasant View Mine Site, located near Madisonville, was mined in the 1930s and 40s. Later mining operations in the 1960s left millions of tons of acid coal refuse polluting water in a large pit to such a degree that it was a deep red color and became known as "Ketchup Lake." The site was classified as a threat to public health and safety in 1997. Reclamation activities moved and estimated 2.5 million cubic yards of materials at a cost of \$4 million. The reclamation of the 250-acre site has resulted in the restoration of Grassy Creek watershed. The project was recognized by the U.S. Office of Surface Mining in 2000 and received a regional and national award from the agency.

Nationwide, some 16,870 projects, amounting to \$8.2 billion, await AML funding.⁴ There are an estimated 80,000 to 150,000 acres of abandoned mine lands in Kentucky that are potentially eligible for reclamation.⁵

Footnotes

1. *Abandoned Mine Reclamation Update*, Office of Surface Mining, 2000.
2. *State Share Balance, Current status*, Office of Surface Mining, Web site - <http://www.osm.gov/fundstateshare.htm>.
3. *Ky. Division of Abandoned Mine Lands*.
4. *Abandoned Mine Reclamation Update*, Office of Surface Mining, 2000.
5. *As estimated by the Ky. Division of Abandoned Mine Lands*.

Measures - notes and sources

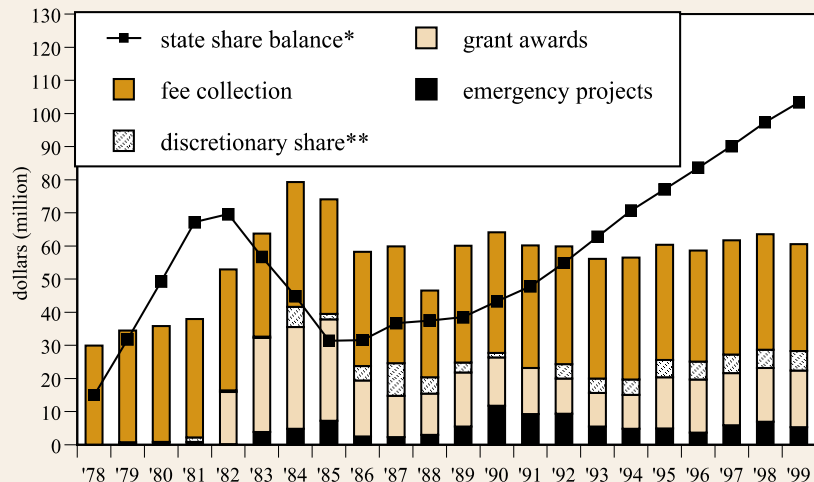
Measure 1. *Selected state AML priority 1 & 2 (protection of public health, safety, and general welfare) and federal AML emergency projects.

*Customers served. Source: U.S. Office of Surface Mining.

Measure 2. *Cumulative balance of fees collected and not returned to Kentucky as specified under federal AML law. **Additional AML Funds based on historical coal extraction. Source: Ky. Department of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement.

Measure 3. *Funds reobligated to the 19th annual grant. Source: Ky. Department of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement.

**Measure 1. Abandoned Mine Land Fund
Fee Collection and Allocation in Kentucky**



**Measure 3. AML Program
in Kentucky (1999)**

Receipts

AML Grant	\$18,609,414
-----------	--------------

Expenditures

Program Adm.	\$3,505,645
Project Costs	\$14,032,416
Deobligated*	\$1,071,353

Projects Funded

Clogged streams	14.2 acres
8 waterlines	78.3 miles
Haz. waterbodies	4
Portals closed	36
Slides	89.9 acres
Haz. equipment	12
Highwalls	2,306 feet
Vertical openings	3
Piles & embankments	16.3 acres